THE

# Chriſtian Hiſtory;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival of Religion in *England Scotland* and *America*.

*Saturday* OCTOBER 22. 1743. § N°. 34.

## *The* Account *of the late* Revival of Religion *at* Halifax *in the County of* PLIMOUTH *finiſhed.*

THere were not many among us that received *Comfort* before the *Spring* of the Year: But then a *conſiderable Number* did; they had as we have Reaſon to hope Soul-*ſaving Diſcoveries* made to them; They had, as they declare, ſuch a Senſe of CHRIST's *Ability*, Sufficiency, and *Readineſs* to help, as drew out their Souls to him; they were made his *willing People* in this *Day of his Power*; They were enabled to cloſe with him in *all* his *Offices*, upon the Warrant of the *Word*, as far as we can judge; and the *Effect* of this was *Love and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*: And in about *three Months* Time there were *forty four* added to the *Church* ‖.

We had little or no *outward* Manifeſtations of *Joy* in the *publick Aſſembly*, viz. being overcome, fainting, crying-out, till ſome time in the *Summer*. In the *Fall* and *Winter* it increaſed pretty conſiderably, tho' never to ſuch a Degree as to break up the publick Worſhip. I was ſilent on this Head for ſome time, being at a loſs what to ſay: But underſtanding that there was One that belonged to a neighbouring Town that was endeavouring to inſtil this Doctrine into my young People, "That the more they cry'd out, the better, ſuppo-

‖ The whole Number that were added before the Cloſe of the Year 1742 were *ſixty two*, and ſince this Year came in, *ſeven*.

ſing it were done in ſincerity: " I thought it time to ſpeak; And upon it ſtrictly caution'd them on thisHead: I told them if they could refrain from it, they acted ſinfully if they did not; but in Caſe they could not, after all their ſtriving, I had nothing to ſay &c.&c. Since this they have more endeavoured to lay a Reſtraint on themſelves; and I believe have not made ſuch Manifeſtations, when they could avoid it.

*Some few* that have been under *ſtrong Conviction* we have Reaſon to fear are fallen away, and become as bad or worſe than ever: but we deſire to bleſs GOD there are no more. And *a few* that we charitably hoped had received the SPIRIT *of Adoption*, have given us too much Ground to think, that they never went farther than *common Illumination*, Heb.6.4. miſtaking *Conviction* for *Converſion*. There is one notorious Inſtance of this: But the *much greater Part* continue ſtedfaſt to this Day, and bring forth the Fruits of Holineſs.

As to *Errors* and *Diſorders*, of which there is ſuch a Cry in the Land, I am ſorry that I have ſo much Occaſion to obſerve, that the *greateſt Cry* proceeds from thoſe that are of *Arminian* Principles, and of *irregular Lives*; tho' I am far from thinking that all are chargeable in this Reſpect, who have not ſeen through the preſent Reformation: There are no doubt, ſome *Nathanael*'s among them, who are ready to cry out, *Can any good Thing come out of Nazareth?* There are one and another, who I hope are good Men, that are too much under the Influence of Prejudice, not having Opportunity of obſerving, or not improving thoſe Opportunities that they have had, or being too much led by thoſe they have an Eſteem for. But however I would ſay, that I am not for ſmothering any thing that is really erroneous or diſorderly: Let the *bad* be born Teſtimony againſt in the Places where it prevails, and the Good be *acknowledged*; Let the Chaff be ſeperated from the Wheat, but don't let us caſt away both together. For my Part, I frankly acknowledge that I adhere cloſely to the *Confeſſion of Faith* drawn up by our venerable Fore-fathers in their *Synod* 1680: Not as it is *their* Confeſſion, or a meer human Teſt, but becauſe I think the *Scripture* Doctrine is there plainly and faithfully ſtated. And I have Reaſon to think that *this* is the Scheme of Religion that all the *hearty Friends* of the Reformation receive and embrace. *Some* have indeed too much verged towards

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*Antinomianiſm* * in leſſer Points, eſpecially when their Eyes were firſt opened and the Change was new; they were too apt then in Deteſtation of *Arminianiſm* to run into the oppoſite Extreme: But further Experience ſerves to correct this. But ſtill the Cry of *Antinomianiſm* has been greater than there has been real Occaſion for. Thoſe that are converſant with the modern *Arminian* Writers know that they brand all with this odious Name that hold the Doctrines of *Calvin*; they deny any Medium between *Arminianiſm* and *Antinomianiſm*. If People were but aware of this, *this Word* would not do ſuch Execution as it has done. I believe not one ſingle Perſon at this Day has imbibed the groſſer Tenets of *Antinomianiſm*, particularly that *the divine Law is not the Rule of Life*; this I am ſatisfied can't be prov'd upon any. And wherever any have harmonized with the *Antinomians* in *other* Points, it is no more than *Luther*, and *Zanchy*, and *Beza*, and many of the ancient *Reformers* from *Popery* did; who ſeem to make *Aſſurance* one eſſential Ingredient in *Faith*.

But I forget that I am writing a *Hiſtory*, and not an *Apology*.

As to *Diſorders* among us, we are free from *Separations*, and from *Trances* and *Viſions*; tho' at firſt there was *one* or *two* that was ſomething Viſionary, but I han't heard any Thing of that Nature this *twelve Month*. We allow not of *Lay-Exhorters*; and indeed there has been *very little* of *public Exhortations* in *this County*. Some have carried the Matter of knowing the State of others to too great a Length; but the Generality are free from it. Some have been too cenſorious, eſpecially at firſt when they were in the Joys of Faith; they were for bringing all Chriſtians to their Standard, and were apt to look upon all as dead and graceleſs that did not appear as full as they: But after-Clouds and Darkneſs, makes them more modeſt and moderate. For my Part, I don't

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* Here I would obſerve, that not only ſome of the Friends, but ſome of the violent *Oppoſers* of the preſent Reformation have too much ſymboliz'd with the *Antinomians*; There are ſome of *that Stamp* in a neighbouring Town; that ſtifly deny *that ever an elect Perſon is a Child of the Devil*; which is the ſame Thing as to ſay that they are juſtify'd from Eternity.

call it Cenſoriouſneſs to think thoſe *unconverted*, that appear by their Diſcourſe to be *wholly ignorant* of the *experimental* Part of Religion, or that are of *ſcandalous* Lives; Theſe are *the Fruits* by which we are *to know them*, Mat. 7. 20. *Three* or *four* run into wrong Notions & Apprehenſions about ſome other Things; but being ſoon convinced of their Miſtake, I think it needleſs to mention Particulars. There was one young Girl *laſt Winter* that endeavoured to counterfeit the Joy of others, but ſhe was ſoon detected by the Friends of the Reformation to her Shame and Confuſion.

As to *Oppoſition*, there are a few Families that have ſtood out all along; the greater Part of whom never made any Profeſſion: But thro' the Bleſſing of GOD, we have had as great *Peace* in the Town ſince this religious Stir, as any Time ſince my Settlement.

Ever ſince *laſt Fall*, the SPIRIT ſeems to be withdrawn with Reſpect to his *convincing* Influences; there being no *new Convictions* among us that I know of; tho' ſome that were under Concern before remain ſo ſtill. And true Chriſtians, the greater Part, ſeem not ſo lively as they have been: I frequently hear Complaints of Darkneſs, Unbelief, Hidings, Doubtings &c. Some have been too much led into *Diſputes*, which tend to eat out the Vitals of Religion, and to draw away the Heart from the main Concern. But yet my People's Love to GOD's Houſe continues. May GOD yet again revive his Work among us: May He who is our Light and our Life return, and breathe upon the dry Bones: May he go on conquering and to conquer, till he has ſubdued the Land. *Amen.*

'Tis melancholy to think of the preſent Situation of Religion in the Land: May it not be ſaid of the People in NEW-ENGLAND as of the *Iſraelites*; *They ſang his Praiſe, but they ſoon forgat his Works! Manna* grows taſteleſs and inſipid after a Year or two's Enjoyment; and too many are for making a Captain, and returning to *Egypt*; they prefer the *former Days of Security* before the *preſent Times*. Oh what will be the End of theſe Things.

But I muſt ſtop; and ſhall ſhut up with *one Reflection*. If theſe Things, which come ſo confirmed by Teſtimonies on all Hands are not to be received as *Verities*, human Proof is at an End, and *all Men are Lyars*. For my Part, I muſt ſay with

with a late excellent Writer, that *if this be not the Work of GOD's Spirit* (in the Subſtance of it) *then Converſion is a Deluſion, and we muſt throw away our Bibles.*

Thus I have given you ſome imperfect Account of the great Things GOD has done for us: I deſire an Intereſt in your Prayers both for me and my People, and reſt

Your Friend and Servant,

JOHN COTTON.

*P. S.* I think it proper to add the following Account, which I forgot in its proper Place; Mr. THOMAS TOMSON aged 78 Years, dy'd here the 26th of *October* laſt: He was the wealthieſt Man in the Town; but what is more to his Honour he was rich towards GOD: He had as we have Reaſon to think, a Principle of Good in him many Years before his Death. In his Life he was eminently Serviceable; it might be ſaid of him as of old *Jehoiada, that he did Good in Iſrael*, 2 Chron. 24. 16. He was juſt and exact in all his Dealings, and made Conſcience of all his Ways: He was Food to the Hungry, a Father to the Poor, and an Harbour even to the Stranger. His laſt Sickneſs was very painful and tormenting to him; but the Diſtreſs of his Soul in the beginning of his Illneſs ſurmounted his bodily Pains; GOD ſeem'd to run upon him as a Giant, and to break him with Breach upon Breach; all his Waves and Billows paſſed over him. But he was pleaſed at laſt to appear for his Relief, and to fill him with Joy and Peace in believing: And the two or three laſt Days of his Life, he ſeem'd to be upheld by an almighty Power only to ſpeak forth the Praiſes of GOD; he taking ſcarce any Suſtenance. After this happy Turn, he ſpent his Time wholly in diſcourſing of religious Things; he would talk an Hour upon a Stretch, and then would ſeem to faint and die away for ſome time; and as ſoon as he revived, he would return to ſome religious Topick, and keep on diſcourſing till his bodily Strength was gone; and this he kept doing by Turns from *Saturday* to *Monday Evening*: Sometimes he would be bleſſing GOD for his Goodneſs; ſometimes giving Advice to his Children and Relations, or to thoſe that viſited him; for great Numbers reſorted to his Houſe, being drawn by the Fame of what they heard: He had ſomething to ſay to every one, ſome Advice to give: He took me by the Hand *that Evening he died*, and ſpake to me

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in particular about *half an Hour*, and he concluded with theſe Words, *I adviſe you to go on, and to diſcharge your Miniſtry with Faithfulneſs, Chearfulneſs, Love and Obedience.* He ſpake very favourably and honourably of the *preſent Times*, tho' he tho't ſome had gone too far; and he bewailed it that while Children and young People were boldly praiſing & glorifying GOD, he had come ſo far behind them, and that he was ſo *baſhful and ſilent* in the Cauſe of GOD, and that he had been almoſt afraid to ſhew his Opinion. In ſhort, he ſeem'd to be in *Heaven* while he was upon Earth; he had glorious Foretaſtes of the Bliſs above; he departed with Praiſes upon his Lips, and with a glorious Triumph: Some of the laſt Words that he ſpake were thoſe of *Paul*, *Oh Death where is thy Sting* &c. This Inſtance put ſome Oppoſers to a Stand; they could not but acknowledge that GOD *was with him of a Truth.*

I would here add a few Words of *another Perſon*, who was dangerouſly ſick the laſt *Summer*; ſhe had been under great ſpiritual Diſtreſs for *three Months* before her Sickneſs; but after the Diſeaſe ſeized her, the Proſpect of Death encreaſed it; her Trouble grew greater and greater; Horror & Amazement poſſeſs'd her Soul, and ſhe could find no Relief; ſhe knew not which Way to turn. At laſt GOD was pleaſed to diſpel the Gloom upon her Breaſt, and to lift up the Light of his Countenance upon her: Upon which ſhe ſent for me; I found that *ſhe* was ſtill apprehenſive that her great Change was near, and *others* were ſo too, but this daunted her not; ſhe appear'd perfectly calm and eaſy; ſhe ſaid CHRIST *was willing, and ſhe was willing*; ſhe called upon others to *praiſe* GOD *with her*, and wonder'd *how any Mouth could be ſhut at ſuch a Time.* Such Things as theſe methinks are ſufficient to convince any of the *Reality* of this Work: What can be more ſatisfying than to ſee Perſons while in the Agonies of Death triumphing and rejoycing and glorifying GOD; than to hear them calling upon others (who it may be are melted into Tears) to join with them in this heavenly Employment, and reproving them for their Backwardneſs thereto? Surely *Nature* can never carry Perſons to ſo high a Pitch. This Perſon afterwards unexpectedly recover'd, and ſhe is I believe an excellent Chriſtian.

*J. C.*

*We ſhould now proceed to other Accounts of the Revival of Religion* here, *but having juſt received Intelligence from* SCOTLAND, *we apprehend it proper to ſuſpend them for a Time, in order to preſent our Readers with ſome further Accounts of the Progreſs of Piety* there.

*The two following* Letters *relate to the* religious Societies *in* Edinburgh, *of which ſome Account was given in the* 86*th Page of our Hiſtory.*

## The *Firſt* from Mr. *George Muire* to Mr. *James Aitken* School-maſter in *Glaſgow*.

"AS you deſire, I have with the Aſſiſtance of Mr. *Archibald Bowre*, Mr. *Din*, and the Serjeant, informed my ſelf a little with Reſpect to the Number and Situations of the praying Societies in this Place, which you'l take very ſhortly, as follows.

They are as near as we can gueſs betwixt *twenty four* and *thirty* in Number, ſome of which will neceſſarily be obliged to divide, by Reaſon of too many meeting together; and that will increaſe the Number.

Amongſt them are ſeveral Meetings of Boys and Girls, who in general ſeem not only to be growing in Grace, but really increaſing in Knowledge. The little Lambs appear to be unwilling to reſt upon Duties, or any Thing ſhort of Chriſt; as a young Gentleman of my Acquaintance told me when under a Temptation to think that he was ſurely ſeeking ſome imaginary Refuge inſtead of the Saviour, he was made to cry out in Prayer, *Lord, I want nothing elſe, and will have nothing ſhort of the very Chriſt of God.*

There are ſeveral Meetings of young Women, who (altho' I never as yet viſited any of them) I am informed, hold on very well. The Serjeant tells me of ſuch a Meeting on the Morning of the Lord's Day, he has known them all bewet with Floods of Tears, juſt melted down with Love to CHRIST, and Affection to one another for CHRIST's Sake. I have my ſelf been much raviſhed (when in a Meeting in the Room below where ſome of theſe reſort) to hear them ſing the LORD's Praiſes with ſuch melodious Voices.

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There are Numbers of young Men who meet for the excellent Purpoſe of glorifying GOD, and promoting Chriſtian Knowledge; amongſt ſome of whom I have the Honour to be a Member; many of them are *Divines*, who are uſeful in inſtructing the weaker Sort of us, and that they endeavour to do with the greateſt Anxiety and Deſire.

A goodly Number of old Men, ſubſtantial ſtanding Chriſtians, meet for their Edification and Inſtruction (the Glory of their GOD being always their chief End) and are thereby often revived and very much refreſhed.

The generality of theſe Sorts above-mentioned do walk very circumſpectly, and really make it appear to the World that they have been with JESUS: Which is very much evidenced in their chearfully bearing Reproaches for CHRIST's Sake. And upon the whole, we hope there is ſuch a Flame kindled as it ſhall never be extinguiſhed.

And with Reſpect to two particular Societies whereof Mr. *Bowre* is a Member, he gave me the incloſed in writing, which you'l peruſe and return me, in Caſe I have need for it afterwards.

This is not all, for ſeveral Country People are beginning to aſſemble together in little Meetings to worſhip their GOD, particularly the Serjeant informs me of one about two Miles from this Place, where ſeveral Plowmen, Lads, and other illiterate Perſons meet for the moſt noble Ends and Purpoſes. and are going moſt ſweetly on, much increaſed in Grace and Knowledge, and ſome are daily added to their Number.

I am informed from the Eaſt Country (where there have been no Societies ſince the Seceſſion) that about *Old Cambus* ſix Miles from *Dunbar*, many are now meeting together for ſocial Prayer and mutual Converſation about Matters of Religion, wherein the Lord is with them of a Truth. And in that Place there is a more eager thirſting for the Word than uſual, and the Miniſters are learning to ſpeak with new Tongues. And one of my Acquaintance who was in this Place laſt Winter has happily been the Lord's Inſtrument in commencing theſe Societies.

( *To be continued.* )